

How can we USE our fears to BETTER ourselves?

By Lise Bourbeau

Fear is a feeling that occurs when one becomes aware of a danger or threat. As a result, the brain reacts instantaneously by sending the proper signals to the physical body so it's in a position to face the dangerous or threatening situation.

First the brain sends a message to the suprarenal glands that immediately secretes adrenaline. This hormone is responsible for releasing the body's glucose supply, which allows the body to react appropriately. The resulting effects are a much greater physical strength needed to defend ourselves, a very active brain to decide quickly, etc. This extra energy can even help some people to avoid dying from a heart attack.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF FEAR: THE REAL FEARS AND THE UNREAL ONES.

Real fears

Here are a few examples:

- A big dog rushes out and jumps on you;
- A car is heading straight for you or your child;
- A person raises his arm to hit you;





It's natural and useful to be fearful when facing a dangerous situation. It allows us to react accordingly, to have the necessary strength and reflexes to protect ourselves quickly.

Unreal fears

Unfortunately most fears experienced fall in the unreal category, as they aren't ensuing from any real danger. They are rather the consequence of our human imagination not being used properly.

The brain can't differentiate between a real fear and an unreal one. In both occasions it reacts as described above. However, because there is no real threat, the adrenaline secreted becomes a sort of poison that flows through the entire system because no amount of physical effort is exerted to consume it. As for the suprarenal glands, the more they are put to use, the more they tire, wear out and they eventually won't respond as quickly in case of real danger. The body will no longer have the sufficient amount of glucose – or energy – necessary to face a real danger appropriately. This explains why a person gets panicky or becomes powerless when facing a dangerous or threatening situation.

The human imagination should be used to make us feel good and not to feel bad by creating all



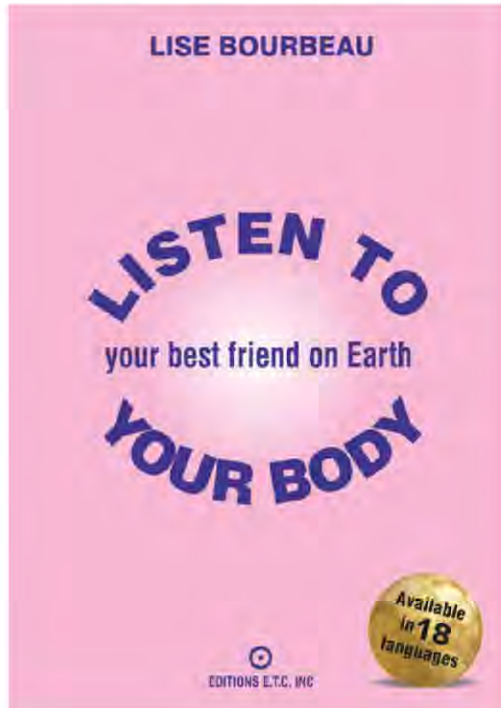
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kinds of unfounded fears. How do we develop such fears? Our imagination is part of our intellect and is influenced by our mental beliefs, which were mostly created during our childhood following some painful experiences whether they were experienced, observed or learned. In all cases, we have associated these experiences with pain and have developed the fear that they might occur again.

Here are a few examples of unreal fears at the physical, emotional and mental levels, which cause no real danger and again, were all created by one's imagination.

Unreal fears at the physical level:

- Fear of an animal (dog, spider, mice, etc.) when no real threat exists;
- Fear of water, storms, darkness, etc.



Unreal fears at the emotional and mental levels:

- Fear of being laughed at, of appearing ridiculous;
- Fear about one's future, of lacking money;
- Fear of being sick, of dying;
- Fear of making a mistake, of failure;

It's important to remember that each time we let some fear overwhelm us; we nurture the belief system sustaining it. This is how it gains strength over time and how the fear of experiencing pain and being hurt is ever more present and strong. Obsessive thinking can be the resulting effect, which then can trigger what is known as phobias. A phobia feeds itself upon a person's energy, which explains the lack of energy seen in people suffering from it.

The greater the fear is, the bigger the emotional wound. Here are the five most important wounds

that seem to be the cause of the majority of the beliefs and fears we harbour: Rejection, abandonment, humiliation, treason and injustice.

When your fears overwhelm you, you no longer are the master of your own life.

Here are several examples to show you when your fears have the better of you:

- They make you experience negative emotions like anger, deception, frustration, etc. because you blame yourself or somebody else for something.
- You doubt or mistrust yourself or someone else.
- When you lie, there are many possible fears at work: The fear of being reprimanded; of not being loved and respected; of being at fault; of showing your vulnerability; the fear of authority.
- You gives excuses all of the time, because you want somebody else's understanding and approval.
- You want to have the last word.
- When you easily feel attacked and you're on the defensive.
- You prevent yourself from buying, doing or saying something.



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Fear does have a positive side to it.

It helps us become aware of what we really want in a certain situation but are too scared by the “possible” consequences imagined by our ego. Therefore, the most intelligent way for us to react to our fears is to use them in order to become aware of the desire that is blocked.

Here are some simple questions you can ask yourself to identify your desire:

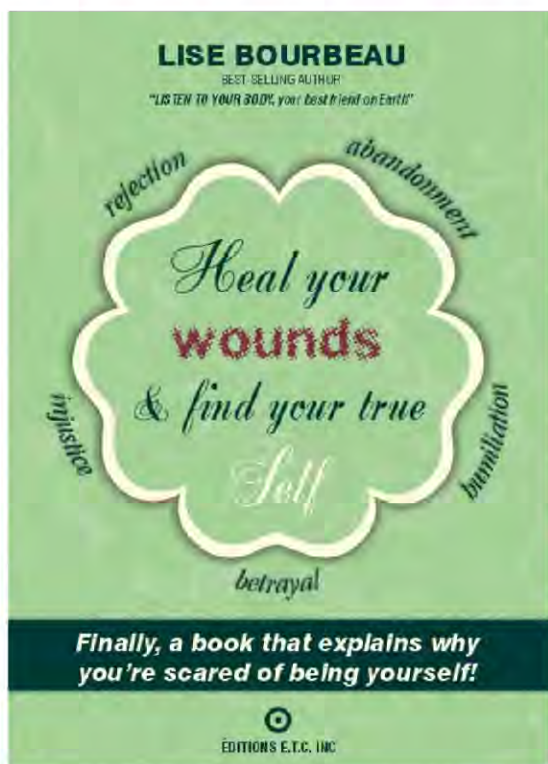
1. *What is this fear preventing me from having, doing and being?*

For example, if you’re afraid of dogs (an unreal physical fear) and freeze when around one, this might prevent you from moving ahead.

Another example: the fear of making a mistake (unreal mental fear) could prevent you from taking risks, seeking new things or ideas, or being creative, and so on.

Each time someone says “...prevents me from...” it really means “I want to... or I desire that ...”.

2. *What kind of unpleasant circumstance could happen to me if I allowed myself to ...?*



The fear of making a mistake (unreal mental fear) could prevent you from taking risks, seeking new things or ideas, or being creative, and so on.

In the example of the dog, you could ask yourself: *What kind of unpleasant circumstance could happen to me if I allowed myself to move ahead in my life like I want, if I showed courage instead of staying put?*

Possible answer: *If I went ahead with my life and showed courage, I would choose the profession I like, but this entails displeasing my parents. I would run the risk of being considered as an ungrateful and selfish person, especially after all my parents did for me.*

In the example of the fear of making a mistake, the question would be: *What kind of unpleasant circumstance could happen to me if I took some risks, if I tried new avenues, if I was more creative?*

Possible answer: *I could make a mistake. Some people might think that I am incompetent and I can never achieve anything in my life.*

Remember one thing: You are trying to avoid doing or being something by fear of being judged by others. Know that some people already judge you of the exact thing that you fear, so why prevent yourself from fulfilling your desire?

3. *Is what I believe in well-founded? Is it true?*

By asking yourself this question, you will realize that most of the time your fear is ill founded. It might be real at times but it sure isn’t the case all the time!

Example: *Is it really true that if I allowed myself to move ahead in my life like I want, my parents would think I was an ungrateful and selfish person?*

4. *And if what I fear really happens, can I face that?*

5. *Acceptance*

The fearful part inside you (the ego) is convinced that it's helping you and is actually contributing in avoiding the worst for you. Therefore, it's important to accept it and not to resent it, because it only wants the best for you. Thank it and inform it that you are now able to handle whatever consequence might arise.

Handling your fears in such a way will help you regain mastery over your life. You will no longer allow your belief system to influence you to the point where you don't feel free to be your true self.

We all are here to learn how to become our true self again. This is the reason why it's so important that we face our fears, instead of acting as if they didn't exist. By rediscovering ourselves, we regain the energy which was spent maintaining our fears and we can put it to a much more creative use.



Be patient and tolerant with yourself throughout this process because some of your fears may be deep-seated. By tackling them one by one, the process of managing them will become much easier. The deep-rooted fears request more compassion from you since they are the result of an acute emotional wound that happened during your childhood. You simply need to give yourself some time. The less fears you have, the more you will have faith in yourself, which will give rise to a greater life.

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